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STATINTL

NASSER'S REVENGE

The late President's untold story of
Suez by Mohammed Heikal,
his close friend and adviser

Owing to the Fleet Street industrial dispute many readers will have missed last week's instalment of Mohammed Heikal's political biography of President Nasser. For them a shortened version is printed here. It contains all the essential elements of Nasser's side of the events which led to Suez. Other readers should begin reading Part 3 in column three below.

This series of articles is extracted from a political biography of Gamal Abdel Nasser by Mohammed Heikal, to be published in book form next year by Doubleday, New York, and other publishing houses throughout the world.

PART 2: He holds Eden's hand, but there's no concord

SIR ANTHONY EDEN, like Dulles, met President Nasser just once, at the dinner table. It must be rare for two men to sit down to break bread together who were so completely opposed in every way as these two.

The dinner was not a social occasion, it was a confrontation between the ultimate representatives of two inimical ways of life.

It was held at the British Embassy on February 26, 1955, when Eden, then Foreign Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister to Sir Winston Churchill, visited Cairo.

It is extraordinary that in all the years the British spent in Egypt they never got to know the real people of Egypt. Millions of British soldiers passed through the country in two world wars. British officers and the upper class and the Tommies got to know the prostitutes and were sub-

jected to the pick-pockets, shoe-shine boys and the pimps on the streets of Cairo. The only time they encountered the real Egyptians was during demonstrations against the British.

This lack of contact was emphasised in official relations and it was one of the paths that led to Suez. The British trusted the Bedouin and were romantic about people like Lawrence of Arabia, Gertrude Bell and Glubb Pasha but they did not trust the intellectuals of Cairo and Alexandria.

So it was with this background that Nasser, the revolutionary dedicated to removing the last vestiges of colonialism from his country, sat down to eat with Eden, the conservative dedicated to preserving his country's waning power.

Nasser, as was customary, had his wife at home. Eden was accompanied by his wife, who was and fashionable in a long evening dress.

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